



Equine Therapy Project John A. Bell Adult Correctional Facility

Ground Breaking Ceremony
Brighter Futures Vocational Training Program
July 2, 2020
10:00 AM

Agenda

Welcome Remarks

Peter Abrahams Program &
Grants Manager. V.I. Bureau of
Corrections

Remarks

Director Wynnie Testamark
Bureau Of Corrections

Remarks

Dr. Donald Pomeranz
USVI EETP

Remarks

Dr. Bradford

Remarks

Honorable Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor
United States Virgin Islands

Shovel Ceremony and photos

Led by Mr. Abrahams

Media Questions



INTRODUCTION

The US Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections on St. Croix and the Virgin Islands Equestrian Equine Therapy Project, Inc. (EETP) are partnering to provide The Elite Program, a vocational training course in horse care and horse training and equine assisted therapy, to eligible inmates at the Golden Grove Correctional Facility. At this facility, the EETP will stable 15-20 retired Thoroughbred racehorses and teach the inmate/students the vocational training program in equine care and management. Equally important is the therapeutic impact on the students through their connection with the horses and good horsemanship.

The first goal of this program is to give inmate-students marketable skills for employment upon release from prison with a greater than average chance of success because of the therapeutic benefit of working with horses. The Elite Program, is a proven program with more than 20 years of success in the US. Its uniqueness and effectiveness is further advanced by the fact that we employ Thoroughbred horses no longer able to compete on the racetrack and train them for a second career.

An additional goal is to create a sustainable, thriving equine centered economy where horses are part of competitive riding programs, training programs for jockeys and backstretch workers, equine therapy programs for disabled people, and equine learning programs in the schools, and for at-risk youth in the Virgin Islands.

Approximately, 20 to 30 male and female inmate-students will participate in the program annually. Each inmate will learn responsibility, team work, and other transferable work skills specific to the horse care industry. An officer with expertise in horse care will be assigned to each site. Inmates will be responsible for building the barns, fences and paddocks, maintenance of the farm, and complete care of the horses from feeding and grooming to medical and rehabilitative care.

BACKGROUND

Founded in 2019, the USVI Equestrian Equine Therapy Project, Inc. 's (EETP) will employ horses currently on the USVI and in need of a career, and offer sanctuary for future horses that will be used in the Thoroughbred racing program in the islands. In pursuing this mission, we have found an ancillary purpose to provide much needed and unequivocally successful programs for incarcerated men, women and juveniles. The principals of the EETP and the Brighter Futures Program bring a cumulative 100 years of experience in successfully rehabilitating horses and inmates as well as public service and nonprofit administration.



THE NEED

St. Croix is in need of a way to better rehabilitate its incarcerated men and women. Under the administration of Governor Bryan, a new director of the Bureau of Corrections, Wynn Timermark was brought in to improve the conditions in the jail and create new programs to educate and rehabilitate the incarcerated men and women. She has also created a new program to assist in successful 'reentry' into society. Brighter Futures will be a cornerstone of the new era

in St. Croix corrections. The program provides a professional vocation, teaches critical life skills, reduces violence, and improves empathy and communication skills. The program is proven to change lives.

Thoroughbreds are already beloved on the island and these programs will help turn that passion towards economic progress for the island.

PROGRAM

The length of time an inmate-student participates varies depending on available open program slots and remaining time in an inmate-student's sentence. On average, an inmate-student can participate in the program from 6 months to many years. Typically, there are 10 to 25 inmate-students involved in the program at a time.

Inmate-students are selected to participate in the program for a number of reasons. First, they must apply for the program ideally, the applicant has shown the ability to work well with others. However, in some cases, inmate-students may be accepted because they present more emotional needs than others. No inmate-student who has a history of sex crimes will be admitted into the program. The program is so popular at the correctional facility there is usually a waiting list of inmate-students wanting to participate.

The Supervisor is an experienced equine professional usually chosen in coordination with EETP and then employed by the Department of Corrections. The EETP employs an additional part-time staff member to work the Prison Program during weekends and other such times that the program supervisor is off. This part-time staff member has direct experience with retired Thoroughbreds.

Successful program completion will require that each inmate-student comprehend and demonstrate competence in the following:

Understand the history of the horse · Perform general stable procedures · Identify horse behavior and psychology · Identify horse conformation · Perform tack care · Perform examinations of the horse · Groom the horse · Perform general horse care and health checks · Understand horse nutrition · Identify hoof care procedures · Identify equine health procedures.

The men and women will graduate to the most advanced level of horse care and horsemanship enabling them to work in the professional equine world upon their release. Inmate-students who have reached this level of horse care and horsemanship work with the horses going onto second



careers. Second careers for horses include: show jumpers, pleasure horses, companion horses, and handicapped riding horses.

OUTCOME

Upon the completion of their sentences, former inmate-students who have worked with the horses have gone on to become productive, solid citizens and have been quick to give credit to the

program. For those who have come from hardscrabble backgrounds, there's no denying the emotional benefits and self-esteem derived from caring for, trusting and, in many cases, loving another living creature.

Equally important, is the fact that an integral part of all horsemanship training is patience, love and leadership of the horse. This lesson gives the incarnated men and women knowledge of themselves and how their actions are perceived that they cannot get any other way.

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION

This program would be implemented immediately upon raising necessary funds. The inmates do the construction work and that is part of their training. Layout, size and planning of the horse paddocks will be done in consultation with local experts and the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture.

FUNDING

A public-private partnership has been formed to enhance the success of the community-based program for the Corrections Bureau and community residents. The programs are being organized by the The Virgin Islands Equestrian Equine Therapy Project, Yepsen and Plkulski, LLC, and in cooperation with the VI Bureau of Corrections. The organizers will be seeking partnerships with foundations, businesses and private individuals who wish to be of assistance. To support this program and for more information, contact Carolyn Smith at 340-998-3860, Diana Pikulski of Yepsen & Pikulski at 802-233-5377, or the VI Bureau of Corrections at <https://boc.vi.gov>.

The Virgin Islands Equestrian Equine Therapy Project, Inc is a non-profit founded and located in the United States Virgin Island (VIEETP), the Elite Program (www.groomelite.com), Yepsen & Pikulski (www.yepsenandpikulski.com), and the VI Bureau of Corrections (www.boc.vi.gov) , have entered into this public-private partnership to bring The Elite Program to the USVI.



SAMPLE CURRICULUM FROM THE ELITE PROGRAM

Introduction to Grooming the Racehorse 099

An overview of the basic information a new worker needs to start working with racehorses.

Introduction

- Groom characteristics and responsibilities
- Rules of behavior

Describing horses & tools to care for them

- Terminology
- Tools of the Trade
- Parts of the Horse

Working with horses

- Equine alphabet (body language)
- How a horse sees & how groom uses that knowledge
- Haltering, running shank, leading
- Tying a quick-release knot
- Removing Bridle & Putting on Halter
- Correction or Punishment? How to correct and not punish
- Daily grooming and hoof care
- Tying mud knots in tails
- Bathing

Stall & Barn Care

- Stall inspection and set-up
- Stall cleaning
- Maintaining the Aisle
- Cleaning & disinfecting tubs, brushes & buckets
- Stall "red flags"
- Stable vices

Health

- Obvious signs of Shin Buck, Bowed Tendons, Shoe Boil or Capped Hock
- Hoof: Thrush, Bruise, Abscess
- Colic: Warning signs, what groom should do
- Teeth: Signs of problems

Identification of Equipment & Tack

- Bandages
- Bridle, bits and other head gear
- Yoke, rings and martingale
- Saddle, pads and irons
- Sheets, coolers and blankets
- Care of tack



Feeding

- Introduction to the Digestive System
- Grain, hay - warning signs of bad feed
- Blister beetles

Shedrow activities

- Walkers
- Checking set list
- Helping others
- Cleaning up

Race Day Schedule & activities

- Bath Time
- Lasix Time
- Ice Time and preparing to walk up
- Walk up and holding barn
- Paddock and hand off to lead pony
- After the Race
- Test Barn

Shipping

- Complications
- Preparation for
- Loading

Personal Safety & Fire Prevention

- Fire prevention
- Fan placement
- Chemical & personal safety

Horses on the Farm

- Pecking order
- Turning out and bringing in horses from pasture
- Leading problems
- Group feeding
- Water tanks
- Weather stress
- Fly control